

Filed for intro on 02/15/95
House Bill _____
By _____

Senate No. SB1503
By Jordan

AN ACT to designate a certain bridge in Columbia as the "Senator Edward C. Blank II Memorial Bridge".

WHEREAS, from time to time, this General Assembly has seen fit to name certain highways and bridges to honor those exemplary public servants who have contributed significantly to Tennessee's growth and prosperity; and

WHEREAS, Senator Edward C. Blank II of Columbia was most assuredly one such meritorious public servant; and

WHEREAS, his passing in 1988 marked the loss of an astute mind, reasoned voice of intelligence and integrity, good citizen and highly respected attorney and legislator for Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, a Capitol Hill fixture for some twenty-two remarkable years, Ed Blank held leadership positions in both houses of the Tennessee General Assembly; serving with alacrity and acumen as majority leader in the House and Democratic caucus chairman and majority leader in the Senate; and

WHEREAS, a man of political savvy and political courage, Ed Blank forged a distinguished career in the General Assembly, first being elected to the House of Representatives in 1966 by the people of Columbia; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Blank championed consumer protection through his meritorious service as chairman of the Governor's Advisory Commission on Consumer Protection and was a steadfast advocate for quality education as Tennessee's representative on the Southern Regional Education Board during his tenure in the House; and

WHEREAS, as Tennessee's representative on the intergovernmental committee of the Southern Council of State Governments, Mr. Blank supported strong, active and responsible state governments, rather than burdensome federal controls; and

WHEREAS, after only two terms in the House, he sought and won the vacant 17th District Senate seat in 1970, thus beginning three terms of exemplary and influential service; and

WHEREAS, as a senator, Ed Blank sponsored several pieces of legislation which will continue to shape life and government in Tennessee, including the Missouri Plan in 1971 to remove appellate court judges from popular election, the 1971 Omnibus Drug Control law, and the Products Liability Law of 1978; he was also instrumental in legislative efforts to reform the small loan industry; and

WHEREAS, Ed Blank was renowned in the General Assembly for his expertise in legal and financial matters and his remarkable ability to explain complex legislation in simple terms; and

WHEREAS, he was outspoken, persuasive in a witty and affable manner and unafraid of controversial issues; and

WHEREAS, while serving as chairman of the former state Governmental Reorganization Commission, Senator Blank co-sponsored legislation calling for sweeping reorganization of state government; and

WHEREAS, he was also one of a group of young legislators who worked to establish legislative independence from the executive branch throughout the 1970s; and

WHEREAS, although serving as chairman of the powerful Senate Commerce, Labor and Agriculture Committee, Ed Blank chose not to seek re-election in 1982, and instead was named that year by Governor Alexander to the State Board of Education; and

WHEREAS, Senator Blank lived in Columbia and practiced law there while serving in the legislature; after leaving the General Assembly, he moved to Nashville and was a partner in the law firm of Trabue, Sturdivant and DeWitt; and

WHEREAS, following his highly productive sixteen years in the General Assembly, Ed Blank turned his considerable talents to lobbying efforts and his law practice; he was a persuasive force among former colleagues and soon became prominent as one of a handful of lobbyists representing major Tennessee corporate interests; and

WHEREAS, Ed Blank was well-known, respected and highly effective in his many endeavors in both the public and private sectors; his expertise, abilities and contributions will not be soon forgotten; and

WHEREAS, Ed Blank possessed uncommon character and integrity and he was a progressive positive force in Tennessee state government for many years; he has left behind a legacy of effective leadership, honorable public service and adroit service to the law that he loved and respected; his death has created a void which has proven difficult to fill; and

WHEREAS, the Maury County Commission, along with numerous other prominent citizens of the community, have expressed a desire to name a certain bridge in Columbia in honor of Senator Ed Blank; and

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly wish to comply with the wishes of the good people of Columbia and Maury County, and by doing so, heartily concur in their assessment of Senator Blank as one of the most dedicated and proficient public servants this state has ever known; now, therefore,

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. That in honor of this exceptional gentleman's bountiful life of integrity, commitment and service, the bridge which spans the Duck River on the "Tom J. Hitch Parkway" within the corporate limits of the city of Columbia, Maury County is hereby designated as the "Senator Edward C. Blank II Memorial Bridge".

SECTION 2. The department of transportation is directed to erect suitable signs or to affix suitable markers designating such bridge as the "Senator Edward C. Blank II Memorial Bridge".

SECTION 3. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it.